

21st Century Cathedrals: What are they?

What and who are they for?

REFLECTION & ENGAGEMENT

BY THE WHOLE PEOPLE OF GOD KNOWN AS THE



EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN CONNECTICUT
PARTICIPATING IN GOD'S MISSION

CATHEDRAL DISCERNMENT TASK FORCE

Called by the Right Rev'd Ian T. Douglas, Bishop Diocesan

Convened by the Rev'd Harlon Dalton, Priest-in-Charge
Christ Church Cathedral

Task Force Members:

Tim Cole, Washington

Whitney Edwards, Westport

Jack Gilpin, New Milford

Everett (Perry) Perine, Hebron

Patricia Wrice, Hartford

Anne Watkins, Norwalk

THE BISHOP'S CHARGE TO THE TASK FORCE

- Study and reflect on the historical place of cathedrals
- Engage the diocese in considering two key questions:
 1. What is the role and function of a cathedral in The Episcopal Church in Connecticut in the 21st Century?
 2. What is the vocation of Christ Church, Hartford?
- Present a report with recommendations to the 2015 Diocesan Convention

QUESTIONS BEFORE US

- What are some possible purposes of a cathedral in this age?
- How does a cathedral differ from a parish church ... or does it?
- Is there a place for a cathedral in the Episcopal Church in CT?
- If “Yes”, what might that look like in the context of living out God’s mission in and through the ECCT?
- If a cathedral building is envisioned, where should it be located?
- If a cathedral without walls is envisioned, what might that look like?

THE CONTEXT: REIMAGINING THE CHURCH

As our 21st century church seeks to reimagine itself, questions about the existence and role of cathedrals should be considered and discussed.

- Our discussion is taking place within the context of ongoing discernment processes encouraging the reimagining of The Episcopal Church at large (TREC) and in Connecticut (TREC-CT)
- At their very best, Cathedrals have served the needs of the whole church within their ecclesial boundaries.

THE EVEN LARGER CONTEXT: A CHANGING WORLD

Why this conversation?

Why now?

FRAMING THE CONVERSATION: FORM VERSUS FUNCTION

Two overriding principles have guided the development of cathedrals throughout the history of the church.

- Form: The physical structure and design of cathedral buildings symbolically express features of their purpose and identity
- Function: Cathedrals play particular roles in the context of their secular and ecclesiastical environment

FRAMING THE CONVERSATION: THE FOUR C'S

In considering what kinds of core structures are needed to support and unify the Episcopal Church in Connecticut, TREC – CT has identified four functions that are best performed at the “diocesan” (as distinct from “local”) level.

- *Catalyst*
- *Convenor*
- *Connector*
- *Capability Builder*

WHICH IS TO SAY

- **Catalyst** – To inspire and provoke all members of the church to live fully into God’s mission of “restoring all people to unity with God and one another in Christ”
- **Connector** – To establish and maintain relationships among communities and constituents; Forge ecumenical relationships and alliances; Foster communication across the church around new ideas, learning, and opportunities for collaboration
- **Convenor** – To assemble the church in traditional and non-traditional ways as a missionary convocation around proclaiming Christ’s gospel and living into the Five Marks of Mission.
- **Capability Builder** – To support leadership development centered around the critical skills necessary for individual and community-wide Christian formation in twenty-first-century contexts.

THE SCRIPTURAL WARRANT FOR CATHEDRALS?

Acts 7:48

Yet the Most High does not dwell in houses made by human hands; as the prophet says, “Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool.

Yet ... Build them, we did!



John 4:21-23

Jesus said to her, ...the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. ... the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth ...



SOME EARLY HISTORY

Initially English cathedrals “were missionary centers ... monks/priests were sent out to plant churches; By the 19th Century there was increasing discussion about the purpose of cathedrals, with some many people questioning their usefulness.”



In some circles, cathedrals fell into disrepute

Over time, bishops built cathedrals for other reasons, including as monuments to themselves



ENGLISH CATHEDRALS MADE A COMEBACK

In the latter half of the 19th C.

Key to the reform efforts was a change in perception by
cathedral Deans

RENEWED FOCUS ON To provide regular and beautiful worship
including superior music and preaching.

- R. W. Church, Dean at St. Paul's, London (1871) declared that ...
 - The church must be used from end to end
 - People must be made to feel that it is a place of prayer & praise
 - The worship must be open to all with no suggestion of payment or of reserved seats
 - Art and music at its very best must assist the offering of dignified worship.

IMPACT OF THESE REFORMS

- Westminster Abbey began holding big services in its nave
- Ely Cathedral (in the 1870s) began holding Sunday evening services under the octagon
- Cathedrals began to encourage tourists, seeking to become more popular and accessible

As a result of these trends, the popularity of cathedrals grew wherever they were found

THE EMERGENCE OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

- After the American Revolution, the Episcopal Church's formal connection to the Anglican Church disappeared along with allegiance to the King
- 1784 – Samuel Seabury consecrated in Scotland
- 1785 -- The Episcopal Church formally constituted and the first General Convention was held.

THE EMERGENCE OF CATHEDRALS IN THE U.S.

- First 75 years, TEC saw no need for cathedrals
- Samuel Seabury's position? Wherever he was, there was the cathedral.
- The term "diocese" came into use around the 1830's
- Beginning in 1862, cathedrals began to appear in the West as missionary centers.
- At close of 19th Century and beginning of 20th Century, cathedrals were built for other reasons.
- 1907 – building of "National Cathedral" in Washington, D.C. begins

DIOCESES' HISTORIC RESPONSES TO THE CATHEDRAL IDEA

One of 3 choices

- We don't need a cathedral (e.g. New Hampshire)
- We're going to build a **BIG** cathedral (e.g. New York)
- We're going to take a big, existing building that *looks like* a cathedral and designate it as one (e.g. Connecticut)

INTO THE 20TH CENTURY

THE CATHEDRAL SYMBOLIZES...

- A sense of identity for a whole diocese, complete with
 - A sense of history
 - A sense of belonging to a wider entity
- A unique expression of the one holy catholic and apostolic church

These are characteristics of a cathedral to which people generally have responded; hence two qualities typically matter:

- **SIZE.** Literally something larger captured in the symbols of large edifices
- **EMINENCE.** A distinct sense of gravity and beauty

THE QUESTIONS BEFORE US

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CLOSING REFLECTIONS

What captures your imagination?

What challenges your imagination?

What does any of this say about *who we are* as ECCT